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ABSTRACT

A 5-year intensive program was designed and implemented to study Black and Hispanic achievement in 152 public schools in Montgomery County (Maryland). The focus was upon achievement in mathematics and reading/language arts, and Black and Hispanic participation in gifted/talented, honors, and extracurricular activities. The intent was to develop school targets and action plans for improving the performance of underachieving students. After conducting their self-study and planning, each school was visited by a team of outside colleagues, students, and community members to review and react to the self-study and give recommendations. Schools then were given the opportunity to develop "mini-grants" and could request up to $5,000 in funds to help folow through on their school plans. The entire effort was an excellent example of how staff development can work productively with the Board of Education, administrators, and teachers in implementing systemwide educational change and school improvement. This paper outlines the entire process used during the 1983-84 school year to initiate work on this program. A list is appended of systemwide targets for improving minority achievement and participation in the schools. (JD)

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THE MINORITY ACHIEVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION EFFORT IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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The Minority Achievement and Participation Effort in
Montgomery County Public Schools

November, 1984

A. Bruce McKay
Judy Patton

Although MCPS has continued to make progress in improving minority achievement in the past several years, 1983 data showed sharp contrast between black and Hispanic students' success and that of white and Asian students. In response to this problem, the superintendent and Board of Education set five systemwide priorities, including one to implement a special emphasis program which would result in substantial gains in achievement performance and participation of black and Hispanic students.

A 5-year, intensive program was designed and implemented in the system's 152 schools to study black and Hispanic achievement in mathematics and reading/language arts and black and Hispanic participation in gifted/talented, honors, and extracurricular activities, and to develop school targets and action plans. After conducting their self-study and planning, each school was visited by a team of outside colleagues, students, and community members to review and react to the self-study and give recommendations. Schools then were given the opportunity to develop "mini-grants" requesting up to $5,000 in funds to help follow through on their school plans. The entire effort was an excellent example of how staff development can work productively with the Board of Education, administrators, and teachers in implementing systemwide educational change and school improvement. This paper outlines the entire process used during the 1983-84 school year to initiate work on this priority.

I. SYSTEMWIDE PRIORITIES - Initiated by Board members and the Superintendent, a two-day retreat was held in August of 1983 to address systemwide concerns and to develop goals and priorities to guide the system's educational thrusts for the next five years. Board members and top executives attended the program, at which five systemwide priorities were established. Appendix A displays these priorities.

II. SYSTEMWIDE CHANGE PROCESS - THE FIRST YEAR

A. STEERING COMMITTEE; ADMINISTRATIVE AREA ROLE

The Montgomery County Public Schools is located in Maryland in the northern suburbs of Washington, D. C. The system serves 95,000 students in 152 schools, managed through three geographical administrative areas. Each area is headed by an Associate Superintendent who has a professional staff of supervisors, specialists, psychologists and other support personnel. While the systemwide change effort was designed and initiated at the central office, each administrative area coordinated and directed the specific work with and at each school.

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In September, 1983, a Steering Committee was established to conceptualize and set in motion a systemwide plan regarding the effort. This small group reported directly to the Superintendent, and included representatives from staff development, quality-integrated education, human relations, ESOL, the academic skills department, and an area associate superintendent. The overall design of the initial change strategies, content of work conferences, self-study process, role of the PRAT teams was accomplished by this Steering Committee. In January, the Committee was expanded to include three classroom teachers and three principals, and it met every other week during the second semester.

B. WORK CONFERENCE I

The first of three systemwide conferences was conducted in October. About 100 persons attended, including all department directors, executive level administrators, selected principals and teachers, community representatives, subject supervisors, and curriculum coordinators. This program was designed to give participants the chance to review the system's statistical data on minority achievement and participation, identify specific areas of concern, and generate reasonable targets for system growth over the 1983-88 period. Working in groups, participants also generated lists of resources, classroom ideas and curriculum practices that could help student achievement.

C. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 1983 ACHIEVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION DATA AND SYSTEMWIDE TARGETS

Achievement scores have been reported by the system to the public, by race and sex, for many years. This data, and additional statistical information on minority participation was assembled into a 100-page statistical summary. At the Work Conference, participants studied achievement data in mathematics, English/language arts and reading, and participation data for non-athletic extra-curricular areas, honors and gifted/talented programs, and others. Preliminary systemwide targets were established at Work Conference I, and were finalized by the Superintendent and his staff within the subsequent month. These finalized targets were presented and discussed at Work Conference II. The systemwide targets are included in Appendix B.

D. WORK CONFERENCE II

The second, three-day Work Conference was held in November, with the same group of participants. In this program the systemwide targets were discussed, several alternative classroom strategies were shared and explored. A preliminary framework for the school self-study was presented, discussed, modified and approved; the guidelines for the Program Review and Assistance Team were finalized. Appendix C outlines the framework for the school self-study amd the guidelines for

the PRAT visits.

E. ORIENTATION OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

The main points of the systemwide priorities, the focus on minority achievement and participation, and the self-study and PRAT visitation process was described generally in a county-wide meeting with all principals. After Work Conference II, School Leadership Training programs were conducted by each Area Associate Superintendent, and the Associate Superintendent in charge of Special and Alternative Schools. School Leadership Teams, including the principal and two teachers, participated in a one-day training conference at which the entire process and problems were discussed. In some cases, additional days of released time was provided for school staffs to work on their self-study and prepare action plans.

F. SCHOOL SELF-STUDY

Schools were given the January - March period to work on their self-study, prepare school targets and tentative action plans. The main elements of the self-study included:

a) School Climate Review
b) Minority Achievement in Mathematics
c) Minority Achievement in Reading (elementary schools)
d) Minority Achievement in English/Language Arts (secondary schools)
e) Minority Participation in Gifted and Talented Programs (elementay schools)
f) Minority Participation in Honors Program (secondary school)
g) Minority Participation in Non-athletic Extracurricular Activities

G. VISITATION OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW AND ASSISTANCE TEAMS (PRAT)

Under the direction of each Associate Superintendent, schools were visited by the Program Review and Assistance Team. The actual composition of each team was determined by the Associate Superintendents, but each team included:

a) a principal from another school
b) a teacher from another school
c) a student (in some cases) from another school
d) a citizen from the community at large (These members were from surrounding universities, interested citizen groups (NAACP and other minority groups), PTA representatives, etc.)
e) instructional supervisor - each team was chaired by an instructional supervisor. Usually this supervisor was the person responsible for instructional program improvement on a regular basis.

The teams visited the school in the March - April period, reviewing the self-study, asked questions and discussed the action plans and gave recommendations for improvement. The report was then reviewed and approved by the Associate Superintendent.

H. WORK CONFERENCE III

In May, a one-day conference was held, reviewing progress, the positive actions that resulted from the entire process, and to discuss the next steps for implementing plans. The minigrant opportunity was presented and discussed.

I. RESOURCE MANUAL AND MINIGRANTS

A 625-page "Resource Manual" was prepared by the steering committee, in which specific resources were named or provided. The manual was organized into nine sections such as, "Mathematics Achievement", "Reading/Language Arts Achievement", "School Climate", and "General Multicultural". Within each section, human resources inside and outside the system are listed, selected articles are reproduced, an annotated bibliography, classroom ideas and strategies are provided.

In May, schools were given a chance to apply for a "minigrant" of up to $5,000 to help implement strategies to improve student achievement. These funds are allocated directly to the school for a wide variety of things, including student tutoring, training materials, consultants for classrooms, teachers, after-school activity buses, and other individual school projects. The implementation of school action plans are not dependent on this additional funding, but the funds do give each school some opportunity for additional support.

III. FOLLOWING THROUGH - THE SECOND YEAR AND BEYOND

The Montgomery County Public Schools are now in the second year of substantial, focused work on the improvement of minority achievement and participation. The Steering Committee was expanded to include other area office representation, and the committee's tasks have been expanded in four areas:

a) to expand the "clearinghouse" function in the school system,
b) to expand community involvement and support for each school's efforts,
c) to set in place a monitoring system to assure that school progress is maintained and supported, and
d) to establish a process to study the central office functions and to make sure that central office resources are spent in alignment with the system priorities, particularly the priority to increase minority achievement and participation. The

Superintendent established a small central office unit to coordinate long-range systemwide planning and program implementation. The PRAT teams will be revisiting each school yearly, and system achievement and participation data will be summarized and incorporated in the yearly planning process.

bulletin

montgomery county public schools rockville, maryland

Board of Education and MCPS priorities

Introduction

The Board of Education reaffirms the MCPS Goals of Education adopted in 1973. Programs that are underway should continue. In that context, the Board of Education is choosing to emphasize certain priorities for the immediate future.

These priorities should be reviewed by schools and departments, incorporated into 1983-84 activities and used for 1984-85 planning.

The superintendent will implement these priorities system-wide by developing strategies to: inform employees, assess current conditions, provide needed employee training, supervise program implementation, and secure feedback to determine progress. The Board and superintendent will review these priorities and evidence of progress on a regular basis.

Priorities

1. **Improve the academic achievement of all students.**
   a) Improve student performance as measured by standardized and criterion-referenced tests and other measures in
      - English language arts, with particular emphasis on reading and writing
      - Mathematics
      - Science, technology and computer literacy
   b) Increase the emphasis on teaching and learning higher order intellectual skills
2. **Implement a special emphasis program which will result in substantial gains in**
   a) The performance of minority students in the classroom and on standardized and criterion-referenced tests
   b) The participation of minority students in
      - Programs for the gifted and talented
      - Higher level academic courses
      - Extracurricular activities
3. **Increase organizational effectiveness and employee capabilities.**
   a) Focus employee training on implementing MCPS priorities
   b) Encourage, recognize and reward employee excellence, initiative and creativity
   c) Improve implementation of evaluation systems to enhance employee effectiveness and student learning
   d) Develop instruments to measure school effectiveness and use them to increase effectiveness in all schools
4. **Improve students' abilities to**
      - Exercise responsibility for independent learning
      - Be responsible citizens
      - Become effective group members
5. **Conduct studies that will result in recommendations for substantive, long-range adaptations in the MCPS instructional program to better provide MCPS graduates with the knowledge and skills they will need to adapt to a rapidly changing world.**

ATTACHMENT B
12/13/83

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MINORITY ACHIEVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION: SYSTEMWIDE TARGETS

INTRODUCTION

The Montgomery County Board of Education adopted a set of five educational priorities on September 13, 1984. Priorities 1 and 2 address the Board's and the superintendent's expectations for academic progress in the Montgomery County Public Schools. Priority 2 specifically addresses achievement and participation of minority students in the total academic program. Staff at all levels -- school, area, and central -- will be examining a number of issues that have direct implications for the achievement and participation of minority students particularly black and Hispanic students. These issues will include teaching strategies, teacher expectations, student learning styles, grouping practices, alternative uses of resources, etc. We are confident that as we expand our knowledge and broaden our practices to include all students, the beneficiaries of our efforts will indeed be all students and not be limited to minority students only. Focus on this priority has resulted in eleven target statements that spell out the expectation of achievement and participation of minority students for the next five years. However, the intent of the target statement is to continue addressing the issues until there are no significant statistical differences existing between the mean score of minority students and the countywide mean score on standardized and criterion-referenced tests. (Countywide data were used to develop the eleven target statements for the school system. Each MCPS school will develop targets based on specific individualized data. As a result, local schools will not be limited to or inhibited from setting targets that exceed the countywide goals.)

MINORITY ACHIEVEMENT IN MATHEMATICS

Data: Maryland Functional Mathematics Test

Target 1: Approximately 33 percent of the black and 42 percent of Hispanic ninth graders passed the test in 1982-83. Steady improvement will occur yearly, with the expectation that by 1988 at least 90 percent of black and Hispanic ninth graders will pass the test in the fall or spring administration.

Data: Enrollment in Grade 9 Higher Level Math courses

Target 2: In 1982-83, only about 37 percent of black and 45 percent of Hispanic students enrolled in regular Algebra I or a higher level course in Grade 9. Steady annual improvement will occur, with the expectation that by 1988 at least 70 percent of the black and Hispanic students in Grade 8 will register for Grade 9 Algebra I and subsequently succeed in the course.

Data: California Achievement Test

Target 3: In 1982-83, the total county math NCE scores of black and Hispanic students are 10-17 points different from the mean for all students. The goal for the next five years will be to show gains of approximately 3 NCE points per year for black and Hispanic students. This progress will continue until there are no statistically significant differences from the county mean.

Data: Achievement of ISM Objectives

Target 4: The MCPS K-8 Instructional System in Mathematics includes 375 objectives, 171 of which have been designated as "key" objectives for purposes of record keeping. In 1979 and 80 black students were achieving objectives expected at each grade level at a rate approximately 20 percent below that of the county as a whole. The data were not available for Hispanics. These data will be reviewed annually and steady improvement will be sought so that by 1988 there will be no statistically significant differences from the county average as measured by an end-of-the-year criterion-referenced test.

MINORITY ACHIEVEMENT IN READING

Data: Maryland Functional Reading Test

Target 5: Approximately 90 percent of the black and 87 percent of Hispanic ninth graders passed the test in 1982-83. Steady improvement will occur yearly, with the expectation that by 1988, 95 percent of black and Hispanic students will pass the test in Grade 9 and 99 percent in Grade 10.

Data: California Achievement Test

Target 6: In 1982-83, black students score 15-19 NCE points below the county mean for all students, and Hispanic students score from 13-14 NCE points below the county mean. The goal for the next five years will be to show gains of approximately 3 NCE points per year for black and Hispanic students. This progress will continue until there are no statistically significant differences from the county mean.

Data: MCPS Criterion-referenced Tests in Narration and Exposition

Target 7: At the present time, the school system does not require the MCPS developed criterion-referenced tests to measure student achievement in reading/language arts. Procedures will be adopted to implement such criterion-referenced tests in narration and exposition; and by 1985, a systematic program of criterion-referenced testing for reading/language arts for all students K-8 will be in use in Montgomery County Public Schools. Initial analysis of data available shows discrepancies between scores of blacks and Hispanics when compared to the county average. Steady improvement will occur yearly, with the expectation that by 1988, there will be no statistically significant differences as measured by an end-of-the-year criterion-referenced test.

MINORITY ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

Data: California Achievement Test

Target 8: Presently, black and Hispanic students score between 12-15 NCE points below county average means on the language battery of the CAT. The goal for the next five years will be to show gains of approximately 3 NCE points per year for black and Hispanic students. This progress will continue until there are no statistically significant differences from the county mean.

Data: Maryland Functional Writing Test

Target 9: Approximately 45 percent of the black and 50 percent of the Hispanic ninth graders passed the test in 1982-83. Steady improvement will occur yearly, with the expectation that by 1988 at least 90 percent of black and Hispanic ninth graders will pass the test in the fall or spring administration.

MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAMS, HONORS PROGRAMS, AND NONATHLETIC EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Data: Minority participation in gifted and talented programs, including honors level courses in senior high schools

Target 10: Data available from 146 schools in 1982-83 showed that 5 percent of black and 6 percent of Hispanic students participated in gifted and talented programs, while 13 percent of all MCPS students participated in such programs. This year, high school honors level courses are being implemented on a pilot basis countywide and data on enrollments are not yet available. The goal for the next five years is to increase black and Hispanic participation annually in gifted and talented programs and to continue until there is not a statistically significant difference between black and Hispanic participation and the countywide percentage.

Data: Minority participation in nonathletic extracurricular activities

Target 11: Currently, black and Hispanic students are underrepresented in nonathletic extracurricular activities. By 1988, there will be no significant differences between the participation levels of black and Hispanic students and those of all students.

ATTACHMENT C

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Minority Achievement and Participation
School Self-Study Process

The purpose of this packet is to give each school principal and staff specific information and guidance for use in conducting the School Self-Study regarding minority achievement and participation. The self-study is to be completed in the November 16, 1983-January 16, 1984 period. After the self-study has been completed, each school will be visited by a "Program Review and Assistance" team. This team will work with you and your staff to review the results of the self-study, discuss your preliminary action plans, assist in identifying resources to help you implement action plans, and will work with you in implementing and monitoring them.

DIRECTIONS:

The "School Self-Study" is focused on the following areas:

A. School Climate Review
B. Minority Achievement in Mathematics
C. Minority Achievement in Reading (elementary schools)
D. Minority Achievement in English/Language Arts (secondary schools)
E. Minority Participation in Gifted and Talented Programs (elementary schools)
F. Minority Participation in Honors Program (secondary schools)
G. Minority Participation in Non-athletic Extracurricular Activities

To address each of the areas above, you are to:

1. Gather information on school climate, environment, and attitudes, using the attached.
2. Assemble the necessary test and achievement and participation data already available in your school, especially the data that can be broken out to illustrate achievement and/or participation by race. Use the DEA packet and guidelines for analyses.

   Sources of data:
   - California Achievement Test data
   - Participation in extracurricular activities
   - SAT scores (if applicable)
   - Enrollment in special education programs
   - Maryland Functional Reading Test scores
   - Maryland Functional Math Test scores
   - Criterion-referenced test data (for those schools that have administered system reading/language arts tests)
   - Students above, below, and at grade level (for those schools that have administered ISM assessments and submitted data to DEA)

3. Review and critique the data for your school, taking the following things into consideration:

   a. achievement levels of minority groups, especially blacks and Hispanics, in relation to the achievement level of whites.
   b. participation levels in Gifted/Talented, Honors, pull-out programs, special and alternative programs, and non-athletic extracurricular activities.
   c. past history of attempts you've made to increase achievement and participation.
   d. level of staff training and experience (a suggested form is attached).
   e. amount and kinds of parent, community, and other available resources.

4. Develop some concise written statements of the "present condition" at your school with respect to minority achievement and participation, and establish "targets" for improving the situation, through 1988, using the enclosed "SCHOOL TARGET STATEMENT SHEETS".

   Example: Suppose you've looked at the results of the Maryland Functional Mathematics Test, learn that only 25% of black 9th graders in your school passed the test in 1982-83. You know that the overall MCPS goal for 1988 is to have at least 95% passing rate. Therefore, you establish the following "present condition" statement and school targets.

- Data: Maryland Functional Mathematics Test passing results

Present Conditions	June, 1984	June, 1985	June, 1986	June, 1987	June, 1988
1. 25% of black 9th graders passed the test at this school in 1982-83.	At least 30% of black 9th graders will pass the test	At least 55% of black 9th graders will pass the test	At least 75% of black 9th graders will pass the test	At least 90% of black 9th graders will pass the test	At least 95% of black 9th graders will pass the test

5. Prepare a list of some of the successful school classroom practices and strategies already in use at your school. Develop a list of the present resources in your school (i.e., media, ESOL, QIE, Chapter I, Special Education, Reading Specialists, Headstart, Volunteers, special programs in school, etc.) that are useful in improving minority achievement and participation. This information can be summarized on the "SCHOOL RESOURCES SHEET".

6. Using the enclosed planning sheets, develop a "Preliminary Action Plan" to help you reach your school targets.